

Citizens Environmental Committee for the City of Arlington, Texas



Report and Recommendations on Idling Reductions and Drive-Through Establishments

**For Presentation to Mayor Cluck and Arlington City Council
Through the
Region Policy and Municipal Infrastructure Committee
December 1, 2009**

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Introduction

Formation of the Committee

The Citizens Environmental Committee (CEC) was created as a standing committee of the City of Arlington on January 10, 2006, through Council adoption of Ordinance 06-008. The original ordinance established a nine-member Committee. The committee was subsequently amended on February 14, 2006, to provide an additional member appointed by the Mayor.

Committee Membership

The current membership of the Committee is as follows:

Roy Miliner, Chair, appointed by Council member Robert Shepard
Roger Behgam - appointed by Mayor Robert Cluck
David Berg – appointed by Council member Robert Rivera
Richard Browning – appointed by Council member Sheri Capehart
Shirley Patterson - appointed by Mayor Pro-Tem Lana Wolff
Glen Dixon – appointed by Council member Gene Patrick
Michelle Licater - appointed by Council member Mel LeBlanc
Mike Maddock – appointed by Council member Jimmy Bennett
Larry Hail – appointed by Council member Kathryn Wilemon
Dirk Taylor – appointed by Mayor Robert Cluck

Committee Charge

The City Council has charged the Citizens Environmental Committee (CEC)

...with evaluating and recommending to the Arlington City Council initiatives and strategies for improving the quality of the natural environment in Arlington. These initiatives and strategies will focus on the following areas: air quality, solid waste/recycling, water quality, handling and disposal of household hazardous materials, clean-up events, restoration of natural habitat, “brownfields” information, and recommendations for developing and implementing “green building” standards that ensure energy-efficient and environmentally-conscious construction of City buildings to the extent attainable under budgetary constraints. The CEC will select a single policy area on which to focus, meet periodically (not less than four times per year) to gather information and formulate recommendations, and submit those recommendations to the City Council before moving on to another policy area.

The CEC addressed the reduction of vehicle idling as it relates to air quality with a focus on drive-through establishments in particular. This document includes an overview of the CEC’s work in this area, with recommendations on idling reduction for Council’s consideration.

Meeting Schedule

The Committee's meetings on vehicle idling and drive-through establishments began in April of 2009. The CEC meetings are currently held mainly in the evenings on the third Wednesday of the month in the Council Briefing Room at City Hall. This topic was discussed at four different meetings between April 2009 and November 2009.

Report and Recommendations on Vehicle Idling Reduction and Drive-Through Establishments

Strategies for Addressing the Issue

The Committee began its work with a presentation on the results of the City's Carbon Footprint analysis in January of 2009, which showed the baseline green house gas (GHG) emissions inventory for both the community and municipal operations for the base year of 2005. In April the City's Transportation Planning Manager, Alicia Winkelblech, shared information with the CEC from the City Council's February Regional Policy and Municipal Infrastructure Committee Meeting on idling restrictions involving drive-through establishments. In May committee members shared their own research on idling and drive-through establishments, and received a more in-depth presentation from Ms. Winkelblech on the facts and impacts of drive-through establishments specific to Arlington. The Committee discussed the issues and developed basic recommendations, which they further vetted at their October 2009 meeting and approved as a formal recommendation for the Mayor and City Council in November of 2009.

Recommendations to the Mayor and City Council

In developing its recommendations, the Committee focused on vehicle idling as it relates specifically to drive-through establishments and idling reduction in general, while being mindful of such factors as ordinance restrictions and budget constraints which may impact City Council's final decisions.

The recommendations of the Citizens Environmental Committee on idling reduction are:

Recommendation 1

The potential negative economic impacts, and dissatisfied businesses and owners outweigh the existing air quality benefits of summarily restricting all drive-through establishments City-wide. Though a universal restriction does not warrant further investigation, there are individual elements of drive-through design and location that should be evaluated by staff to mitigate idling to any extent possible, some of which are listed as additional recommendations in this report.

Recommendation 2

Council should request staff investigate restricting drive-through establishments in specific areas of the City such as the Entertainment District and the Highlands, where a higher level of pedestrian activity is present and the caliber of development desired is not conducive to drive-through establishments.

Recommendation 3

Council should request staff to investigate revising building standards for establishments desiring to have drive-through facilities. Factors such as the allowable or required length of drive-through lanes, number of lanes, and number of service windows a drive-through establishment incorporates should be considered, using best practices that mitigate vehicle idling time.

Recommendation 4

The CEC recommends improved outreach and community education related to idling at drive-through establishments and the impact on air quality.

Recommendation 5

The City should engage in targeted education at locations where idling is prevalent, such as railroad crossings, through measures such as signage that encourage drivers to turn off their vehicles while waiting for the train(s) to clear.

Recommendation 6

The City should partner with school districts and individual campuses to engage in targeted education, through efforts such as signage, and outreach with parents to reduce passenger vehicle idling and with bus drivers to reduce school bus idling. The City should educate the school districts on the adopted Motor Vehicle Idling Restrictions.

Recommendation 7

The CEC recommends evaluation of traffic signal timings to reduce emissions at red lights.

Summary and Conclusion

It is the intent of this committee through this report to provide City Council with reasonable, timely, and cost-effective measures to decrease vehicle idling in the community and mitigate the impact that drive-through establishments have on air quality.

Because anti-idling regulations, such as the City Council adopted Motor Vehicle Idling Restrictions (Ordinance 08-076,) are limited by State law to vehicles weighing 14,000 pounds or greater and are enforceable only in the months of April through October, other measures must be employed to mitigate idling at drive-through establishments. The community must be encouraged to voluntarily avoid activities that cause unnecessary air pollution through vehicle idling.

Conservation of fossil fuels and the associated reduction in air pollution and emissions is quickly becoming a necessity. The Committee believes these recommendations can eventually be achieved and should maintain a high priority as Arlington continues emissions reduction and air quality activities.

Respectfully submitted,

The Citizens Environmental Committee

Roy Miliner, Chair

Roger Behgam

David Berg

Richard Browning

Shirley Patterson

Glen Dixon

Michelle Licater

Mike Maddock

Larry Hail

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Attachment 1- Statistics on Drive-Through Establishments in Arlington

There are approximately 400 drive-thru establishments in the City of Arlington
This number includes the following types of businesses

- Banks
- Pharmacies
- Fast Food Restaurants
- Dry Cleaners
- Coffee Shops

By Type and Specific Location

	Entertainment District	The Highlands	Cooper by the Parks Mall	Lamar Collins	Downtown	Total
Fast Food	21	5	10	7	12	55
Coffee House	4	1	4	2	3	14
Pharmacy	5	2	2	1	2	12
Bank	12	7	3	6	8	36
Dry Cleaner	6	0	2	2	1	11
Total	48	15	21	18	26	128